

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

TWO NOVELS.

*Kismet*, (No Name Series) 12mo, pp. 235. Roberts Brothers.*Madcap Violet*. A Novel. By WILLIAM BLACK. 12mo, pp. 422. Harper & Brothers.**Kismet** is a light and simple enough story of modern fashionable life, with the advantage of being sketched upon a Nilotic background. He is thirty-five, and she, we suspect, is about twenty. They meet at Sheppard's Hotel in Cairo, and dine face to face every day, without speaking to each other—as is the American habit abroad—until she has him for his coldness, and he condescends to be amused with her flippancy. In Upper Egypt he presents the letter of introduction from her betrothed lover, which he has been carrying all the time, and they quarrel in order to be drawn nearer. At Thebes they learn to tolerate each other; at the First Cataract, they become aware of mutual attachment; at Abu-Simbel, in Nubia, love is declared and accepted. But the bold, defiant, and dangerously frank Miss Hanly suddenly turns into a coward and a prude. She conceals her former betrothal until the return to Thebes on the downward trip, and then reveals it to Mr. Livingston in an unheard-of manner, by giving him a letter from the absent lover, which she has carried in her pocket for days, and *not yet read!* Believe that of a woman who can! The inevitable explosion then comes: the bottom drops out of his trust in her (as well it might), and he is severely cold and polite. Nevertheless, when they step at Dendera, his increasing pallor wins him almost back. Very absurd for a man of thirty-five, he breaks away again, because she will not allow him to seek out the absent lover—who, by the by, is his good friend—and fight a duel. On reaching Cairo, the lover himself turns up; but the scene of his meeting with Miss Hanly is behind closed doors. It is considerably vailed from us, like the face of Agamemnon, in the old Greek painting. Four weeks later, she sails from Alexandria for Europe. Mr. Livingston, who has followed his rival to Jerusalem and nursed him in a fever, all at once appears on deck with the returned engagement-ring, which Miss Hanly, evidently by design—although the author would have us believe it is mere accident—allows to fall into the sea. Then he seizes her cold hands, draws her towards him—and—well, that is the end. Hardly a plot, the reader may say, yet none the worse for its simplicity. The Egyptian setting is, on the whole, very well constructed, and is the main attraction of the book. Had it been the Mishelemp instead of the Nile, with stoppages at Columbus and Keokuk instead of Kamak and Phina, a great many persons would care much less for the story. The subordinate figures are mostly of the lay order, except a Miss Campbell (Scotch), who is really an admirable presentation of a gay, rattling, fascinating, shallow-hearted and somewhat-proud young woman of the world. Without her, we might find the company a little tiresome. The love-passages are unexpectedly good, considering the whimsical inconsistency of the characters; both he and she seem to be actually in earnest. Moreover, they are not wholly conventional but freshly and vigorously conceived. If the story had not been suggested as a nucleus around which to weave pictures of Egyptian scenes and experiences, it would probably have been better; yet, on the other hand, it would have lost its characteristic atmosphere. The descriptive portions are best when they are briefest, especially when effects of light and air are given as adjuncts to the representation of emotion. But one must smile when the author (p. 181) describes the easter-bean as minute as if it were an unknown plant in this country, where it stands on every summer-hill; and we should like to know with whose eyes she saw *Larches* (p. 217) in Nubia! In spite of deficiencies which inevitably grew out of the original design of the work, "*Kismet*" gives evidence of genuine literary ability. It is a decided advance upon the preceding number of the series.**Macmillan & Co.** have issued a second and revised edition of Tait's "Recent Advances in Physical Science." It is a handsome, well-printed volume of 363 pages, devoted mainly to a presentation of what is known of Matter and Force, including Heat, Radiation, Absorption, and the spectrum analysis.

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## Miscellaneous.

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